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**Submitted to the Appropriations Committee  
Friday, March 18, 2022**

Good morning Senator Osten, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of:

House Bill No. 5005, An Act Concerning Funding for the Victim Compensation Program

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) supports any and all efforts to advance the rights of crime victims and improve the delivery of services to crime victims.

Currently, crime victims who sustain personal injury (as defined in C.G.S. § 54-201(2)) may file an application for victim compensation with the Office of Victim Services, Judicial Branch, for assistance in the payment of medical/dental expenses, relating to the crime, that is not covered by the victim's medical insurance or other collateral source.

Additionally, surviving family members of a homicide victim may also apply for victim compensation for assistance with funeral expenses, crime scene clean-up, survivor benefits and lost wages in certain circumstances.

The victim compensation program does not compensate crime victims for property loss or damage. Crime victims must request an order of restitution in the criminal court, which would order the defendant to pay the victim for the property damage or loss resulting from the crime. Restitution paid by the defendant often takes years to satisfy, which is another frustration experienced by crime victims.

House Bill No. 5005 would certainly financially restore a victim's property loss or damage much quicker than a restitution order in the criminal court, so the OVA supports the concept, however, it should be noted that this cannot be done within available appropriations. Significant funding must be provided to further this initiative, so crime victims are not forced to fight for the same pot of insufficient funds for crime victim services.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony.